

1. A method of consumer cash value accumulation based upon point-of-sale transactions between consumers and merchants, the method comprising:

P1 5 each merchant determining at least one credit rate to be applied to selected purchases from that merchant;

P1 3 at the point-of-sale, obtaining from the consumer an account number unique to the consumer and the consumer's birthdate;

P1 10 at a merchant location, determining a credit value for the transaction based upon the dollar amount of the transaction and the applicable credit rate determined by that merchant;

P1 15 3 providing to a central system for each transaction, the consumer's account number and birthdate, and the credit value;

P1 20 3 for each transaction, accumulating, at the central system, cash value in a consumer account associated with that consumer's account number and birthdate by adding the credit value to the cash value in that consumer account; and

P1 25 4 selecting at least one birthdate and providing for each consumer account associated with that birthdate access to funds in an amount based upon the cash value in that consumer account.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

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resetting to zero the cash value in each consumer account for which access to funds is provided.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein access to funds is provided by issuing a check in an amount equal to the cash value in that consumer account.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein access to funds is provided through a funds dispensing electronic terminal communicating with the central system, and which dispenses the funds when properly accessed.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein, for each transaction, merchant data associated with the merchant is transmitted to the central system along with the consumer's account number and birthdate and the credit value, the method further comprising:

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10 for each transaction, accumulating, at the central system, bill value in a merchant account associated with that merchant's merchant data by adding the credit value to the bill value in that merchant's account; and

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17 generating for each merchant account a bill in an amount based upon the bill value in that merchant account.

6. The method of claim 5 further comprising:
P1 resetting to zero the bill value in each merchant account for which a bill is generated.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising:
P1 resetting to zero the cash value in each consumer account for which access to funds is provided.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
P1 3 assigning to each consumer a consumer account number which is that consumer's unique Social Security number.

9. A centralized consumer cash value system for transactions between consumers and multiple merchants comprising:

P1 at each merchant location at least: ✓

P2 5 consumer data input means at the point-of-sale for inputting an account number unique to the customer and the consumer's birthdate;

P2 10 transaction data input means for inputting the dollar amount of the point-of-sale transaction;

P2 memory means for storing a credit rate selected by the merchant;

SK 3/19/90 P2 15 processor means for determining a ^{credit} ~~cash~~ value based upon the dollar amount of the point-of-sale transaction and the selected credit rate; and

P2 20 3 first communication means for transmitting to the central system the consumer's account number and birthdate, and the credit value related to each transaction; and

P1 at a central location, a central system having at least:

P2 25 3 second communication means for receiving the consumer's account number and birthdate, and the credit value related to each transaction;

PR consumer account memory means for
30 storing cash values for a plurality of
consumer accounts, each consumer account
being associated with a respective, unique
account number and one of a plurality of
birthdates;

PR processor means for incrementing the
35 cash value in a consumer account associated
with a received consumer account number and
birthdate by an amount corresponding to the
received credit value; and

PR unit means for providing to each
40 consumer having a selected birthdate access
to funds in an amount based upon the cash
value in the consumer account associated
with that consumer.

10. The system of claim 9, said processor means including means for resetting to zero the cash value in each consumer account for which access to funds is provided.

11. The system of claim 9, said unit means including a check printer whereby access to funds is by printing a check in an amount of the cash value in that consumer's account.

12. The system of claim 9 further comprising at least one funds dispensing electronic terminal communicating with said unit means for dispensing the funds.

13. The system of claim 9 wherein the first communication means also transmits and the second communication means also receives, related to each transaction, merchant data associated with the merchant along with the consumer's account number and birthdate and the credit value, the central system further having:

b1 merchant account memory means for storing bill values for a plurality of merchant accounts, each merchant account being associated with respective merchant data;

b1 said processor means further for incrementing the bill value in a merchant account associated with received merchant data by an amount corresponding to the received credit value; and

b1 means for issuing to each merchant a bill in an amount based upon the bill value in the merchant account associated with that merchant.

14. The system of claim 13, said processor means further for resetting to zero the bill value in each merchant account for which a bill is generated.

15. The system of claim 14, said processor means further for resetting to zero the cash value in each consumer account for which access to funds is provided.